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SUBJECT: JOINT WEEKA NO. 11 CIA-16 FBI-1

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MILITARY

Negative

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EXTERNAL - POLITICAL

1. US - Soviet Relations. Readers of the Soviet press could judge from several bare news reports that the US and USSR are in a period of sounding-out and quiet diplomacy. The papers reported without comment that Khrushchev had received Ambassador Thompson on March 9 at the latter's request. Likewise there were a number of press reports concerning meetings between Gromyko and Ambassador Stevenson, which gave no details.

Although there was little press comment on the outlook for US-Soviet relations, that which appeared took the line that an improvement is possible but cannot be guaranteed, owing to the continued existence of "cold war forces" such as the Pentagon and the "monopolies." One paper said that encouraging signs about the Kennedy Administration were the decision not to resume flights over the Soviet Union, the muzzling of admirals and generals in making political speeches, and the US request for postponement of nuclear test suspension talks in order better to prepare for them.

An unusual development was the publication in Pravda of a two-column summary and extensive excerpts from Under Secretary Bowles March 14 speech. The Pravda account glossed over parts of the speech which are sensitive from the Soviet point of view, such as Communist China, the origin of the cold war, and the validity of Marxism. But it included passages that peace would not be served by a hypocritical disarmament agreement, and that disarmament required a step by step approach and progress on the political side. It seems likely Pravda was encouraged to give the Bowles speech such treatment because it lead off with arguments which the Soviets can use to support Khrushchev's thesis regarding the change in the correlation of world forces.

Other elements in Soviet press treatment on the US were: President Kennedy's March 15 press conference was given very brief coverage with only a few selected subjects reported; the Secretary's statements concerning the US position on Berlin was compared to the icy winds of March; American press reports were cited concerning the training of special troops in Europe for eventual use against the USSR and Eastern European satellites; the alleged "censorship" in the US through obstruction of the delivery of Soviet papers, a practice which the Soviet press claimed was not fully eliminated by Secretary Dillon's order; the Peace Corps was not made the butt of sharp attacks as much as simply scoffed at.

2. Laos. The Soviet press was evasive and obscure in reporting Phoumi Nosavan's mission to Phnom Penh but refrained from hostile treatment of it. It took the line taken that Phoumi was driven to try diplomacy because of his military failures, that he returned to Vientiane from Phnom Penh empty-handed, and that the key question in a Laotian settlement remains the convocation of an international conference.

As frequently has proven to be the case in the past when negotiations and political moves are in progress, the Soviet press recently has been sparing in comment or even in reporting of current developments. It has said nothing about Phoumi's planned second trip to Phnom Penh but has reported that

Souvanna Phouma departed Phnom Penh for Hongkong and thence to visit Asian, African, and European countries, including the USSR. An exception to the general sparse coverage was on March 15, which had been designated "Laos Day" by the A-A Solidarity Committee, and which produced a rash of articles in all Moscow papers on Laos. There was relatively little direct criticism of the US. But an implicit and in some case explicit element in most coverage was the charge that the US is behind the Phoumi-Boun Oum "rebels" and hence is responsible for current hostilities and that it now is up to the US to make a peaceful settlement possible by agreeing to an international conference.

A continuing underlying theme in the press was the military successes of Kong Le and the Pathet Lao. It was claimed that Phoumi's offensive against the Plaine des Jarres had been stopped and that Kong Le and he Pathet Lao now are on the counter-offensive. The press left the impression of Phoumi's 'inevitable' military collapse by claiming that many of his troops have been deserting or have been captured together with their weapons.

As before Soviet logistic support of the Pathet Lao remained taboo in the Soviet press.

3. Congo. Throughout the week Soviet press coverage of the Congo remained light and gave virtually no idea of what is happening there. With the exception of comment on the Tananarive Conference and two Gizenga statements, there has been practically no coverage of the week's developments, and no reference has appeared to General Lundula's activities.

The Tananarive Conference results were sharply criticized by the Soviet press as constituting an effort to split up the Congo and thereby assist continuation of colonial rule. Pravda characterized the conference as organized by American and other Western agents in order to gain control of Congo developments.

The press carried quotes from Gizenga's letter to Hammarskjold stressing that it is essential for the stability of the Congo that his authority be recognized throughout the republic and that parliament be reconvened.

A TASS interview with Gizenga was reported in Pravda March 17. Gizenga was cited as reemphasizing the need to establish his authority throughout the Congo and reconvening the parliament. The TASS report added that UN representatives in Stanleyville had, behind the backs of the Central Government, been in touch with provincial authorities in an effort to persuade them to attend the Tananarive Conference.

4. Iran. The Soviet press, reporting on the Iranian Premier's speech on March 12 to the parliament, played-up his remarks on Soviet-Iranian relations. Although there was no direct comment on the speech, the net effect of the coverage was an impression that relations between Iran and USSR have taken a turn for the better. Most Soviet papers, surprisingly, quoted the Premier's statement that Iran is faithful to its defense pacts, has very close and friendly relations with the US, the Iranian people have not forgotten US moral and material help, and warmly approve of US policy which is in defense of peace and maintenance of freedom.

5. Berlin/Germany. The Soviet press continued to report critical West German reaction to the February 17 aide memoire and to attack Bundeswehr activities. On March 11 several Moscow papers reported Adenauer's press conference statements criticizing the proposals in the February 17 message and declaring that FRG policy on Germany and Berlin is in full accord with that of the US.

The press continued to publish feature articles on Bundeswehr bases in other NATO countries and to attack Bundeswehr General Ferch who is described as the besieger of Leningrad.

The annual Koenigs winter conference of British and West German public figures was also reported. The conference, according to the Soviet press, revealed that Bonn's policies have little support in Britain, and that there is widespread British support for recognizing the GDR.

INTERNAL

6. Khrushchev Continues Provincial Tour: Following participation in the Siberian agricultural conference, N. S. Khrushchev stayed on in Novosibirsk until March 10, made a tour of the Siberian Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences located nearby. (The Pravda March 11 account quoted Siberian Branch's M.A.LAVRENT'YEV as giving Khrushchev personal credit for the establishment of the Branch's electronic computing center.) The next day, his arrival at Kokchetav in the Kazakh virgin lands area brought forth a greeting committee of top Kazakh and Tselinnyy Kray party-government officials including, according to written and photographic evidence, a beaming V.V. Matskevish, now No. 2 official in the Tselinny Kray by virtue of his position as chairman of the Kray's executive committee (ispolkom). While in Kokchetav, Khrushchev made what seems to have been a fairly prolonged visit to a local state farm, speaking to the state farm workers in a meeting at their club. Arriving in the Kray center of Akmolinsk March 12, he may have had a brief respite before participating in another huge conference, one of leading agricultural officials and workers of Tselinnyy Kray, which began March 13. Official participation was augmented by Soviet Minister of Agriculture M.A. OL'SHANSKIY and "dean" of Soviet geneticists T.D.LYSENKO among other "agricultural" personages whose presence testifies to the particular importance which Khrushchev attributes to the Tselinnyy Kray in his overall plans for agricultural development.

There have been no indications of Khrushchev's activity since the end of the Akmolinsk conference March 14. His speech that day, broadcast without prior announcement, has not yet appeared in the press. A delay in its publication fits in with recent practice. Thus publication of his March 8 speech in Novosibirsk was held until the day of his arrival in the Tselinnyy Kray.

7. Criticism and Punishment. The momentum of the criticisms unleased by Khrushchev's still continuing attacks against misbehaving or incompetent officials in the provinces is being bolstered by similar attacks by Khrushchev's leading party subordinates at regional conferences and meetings and, in turn, by their underlings at the local levels. Although by and large pale reflections of Khrushchev's critical performances, they follow the same general pattern

and obviously are for the same purpose of tightening local discipline and exacting improved and increased productive effort, especially in agriculture.

Examples at the union republic level are Azerbaidzhan First Secretary V. Yu. AKHUNDOV's speech at the republic party's central committee plenum held March 1-2 (Dukinsky Rabochiy, March 3), Tadzhik First Secretary T. UL'DZHABAYEV's reportedly critical role at a Tadzhik agricultural conference called by republic's central committee March 4 (Kommunist Tadzhikistana Mar. 5), and Armenian First Secretary Ya. N. ZAROBYAN at an Armenian party central committee plenum March 9 (Kommunist Armenia of March 10).

The central and regional press also have contained many reports of disciplinary actions against individuals, sometimes limited to public reprimands or adverse notations in party books (not taken lightly here) but increasingly involving less of job, dismissal from the Party, and sentencing to terms of disciplinary labor or "deprivation of liberty." Some of the more spectacular cases, particularly those to which Khrushchev has drawn public attention, have been reported widely in the regional press, obviously for their value as object lessons.

8. Continuing Armenian Party-Government Shake-up. The Armenia party-government leadership has undergone considerable change in the past several years, particularly in the party during the last year. Until December 1959, First Secretary S.A.TOVMASYAN managed to retain his own leading position, possibly through the fairly frequent shifts of subordinates. In February 1960, a former secretary who had been given a tour as Armenian first deputy premier (First deputy chairman of the Armenian Council of Ministers), Ya. N. ZAROBYAN, returned to the secretariat in the No. 2 position as second secretary. It was he who replaced Tovmasyan when the latter was relieved ("in connection with transfer to work outside the republic") last December 29. Of Zarobyan's four subordinate secretaries inherited from Tovmasyan, three were replaced in February and the fourth, S.L.TUMANYAN has now (March 10) been released "in connection with transfer to other work." (His replacement is G.T.ARUTYUNYAN who has been on the Armenian Council of Ministers as a first deputy chairman of the republic's GOSPLAN). On the "government side" where the changes have reflected to a degree the various party shifts, two new deputy premiers (G.S. PETROSYAN and S.A.MOVESYAN) have been identified since November; a former minister of agriculture, G.V.OGANESYAN, was appointed March 7 to head the newly formed Armenian Main Administration of State Farms; L.S.VARTANYAN, some years ago head of the Armenian Central Committee's Section for Agriculture, emerged March 7 as a minister in charge of the new Armenian farm supply organization ARMSEL'KHOZTEKNIKA: and, also on March 7, the incumbent Armenian Minister of Agriculture G.A. STEPANYAN was replaced without mention of cause by one Ye. S. KAZARYAN.

The above and possibly other still pending personnel shifts may have been a factor in the long postponement of the Armenian 40th anniversary celebrations from November 1960 to May 6-7, 1961, some seem obviously related to the continuing reorganization of Soviet agriculture after a poor 1960 crop year, and others may be part of a general clean-up in advance of the Armenian Party Congress, scheduled for September 21, 1961, which will elect a new Armenian

Central Committee and choose delegates for the 22nd CPSU Congress in October.

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